

REGENTS' ENGINEERING PATHWAY PROGRAM

General Meeting

Middle Georgia State College

Friday, November 17, 2017

The attendance list (file) is attached.

Dr. Mohammad Davoud, Dean of the College of Engineering & Information Technology at Georgia Southern, opened the meeting and welcomed the attendees. He noted that this meeting is a good opportunity for REP Coordinators to ask questions of the engineering institutions representatives.

The REP Program hopes to hold this meeting once a year to facilitate communications between all REP institutions. Dr. Davoud stated that communications between all REP programs helps the engineering institutions estimate how many students are in the pipeline to transfer to their programs, and gives the sending institutions information on how well their students are doing in the engineering programs. The BOR has asked all REP institutions for information that they will collate and share. This information will also help identify which transfer students at each institution are in the REP Program.

Georgia Southern (presentation file attached)

Dr. John O'Malley presented an outline of information about Georgia Southern's REP Program.

Question: Will GS apply for accreditation for the manufacturing and other new engineering programs?

Answer: Yes – ABET requires programs to have graduated students before applying for accreditation.

Once GS has graduates from manufacturing engineering (expected 2019), computer engineering (expected by 2020), and construction engineering (expected by 2020), we will apply to EAC/ABET for accreditation of the programs. It is usual for ABET to award accreditation retroactively to cover the first cohort of students who graduated from the program.

Mr. Neal Richardson presented information about transfer admissions at Georgia Southern. GS will hold a Transfer Visit Day on March 3, 2018, for which students may register online. If you would like to bring a group of students for Transfer Visit Day, please notify Mr. Richardson or Dr. O'Malley.

Application deadlines are December 1 for spring matriculation, and August 1 for fall. This year, GS awarded approximately \$140K in scholarships to highly qualified transfer students. We want students who will get involved in the University and leave a legacy. Dr. Davoud added that the College also awards numerous scholarships, and can work with REP Coordinators to help their students apply.

Dr. O'Malley noted that course equivalency sheets are included in the folder provided.

Question: Which language is taught in ENGR 1731 (Computing for Engineers)? **Answer:** GS and Georgia Tech usually use MATLAB, but things are changing slowly and we can work with individual institutions for equivalency.

Question: Do transfer students have to take FYE (First Year Experience)? **Answer:** Not if they are transferring with more than 30 credit hours.

Question: Can students apply at any point in their academic career? **Answer:** Yes, but the recommended coursework should prepare students for success. There is no longer a guarantee for students to transfer, but the REP Program is a path to help students succeed in engineering. Some institutions don't have all the courses listed in the equivalency sheets, but we appreciate whatever level your institution can take your students to as they prepare for an engineering major.

Kennesaw State (presentation file attached)

Dr. Thomas Ball presented information about Kennesaw State's REP Program. He noted that KSU has the same issues with accreditation as does GS – all KSU engineering programs with graduates are accredited, and the two newer programs will apply soon.

At KSU, "Engineering Standing" is required for most upper level courses. Students must have a 2.7 GPA and have completed specific courses in their major in order to apply for Engineering Standing through their department. This is a gate for the engineering programs to separate those who can succeed in engineering and those who cannot.

Because KSU, as with GS, can't differentiate between REP and non-REP students transferring into their engineering programs, they will add the following statement to transfer admissions applications effective January 2018: "I am planning to follow the REP Program." The BOR has allowed competitive admissions at KSU beginning fall 2018 for entering freshmen, based on high school GPA and SAT or ACT scores.

Mercer University (website url: engineering.mercer.edu/admissions/regents-engineering-pathway.cfm)

Dr. Wade Shaw introduced Dr. Scott Schultz to discuss what Mercer is doing to support the REP Program. Dr. Schultz noted that Mercer has ABET accreditation for engineering in general. Because Mercer is not a USG institution, they have different requirements for transfer admission, which can be viewed on their website. Also on the website, students can "build your own transcript" to identify course equivalencies for transfer from almost any other institution of higher learning. Mercer requires transfer students to have a 2.5 GPA; apply to the School of Engineering; have completed Chemistry, Physics, Calculus I and II; and be in good standing. Dr. Schultz noted that there is a large core of engineering courses Mercer students usually take in their sophomore year.

As Mercer is a private university it is more expensive than the USG institutions; however, every engineering student is supported by a scholarship. In addition, there is a 4+1 program for students to earn their M.S. on an expedited timeline.

Question: Does Mercer have co-ops? **Answer:** We encourage internships, but they aren't required. However, many are available through Career Services, e.g., at Robins AFB and numerous manufacturing operations nearby. Mercer does not recommend co-ops because several of their courses are only offered one semester a year.

University of Georgia (presentation file attached)

Dr. Ramana Pidaparti presented information about UGA's REP Program. He noted that UGA sponsors a program bringing employers on the campus to interact with students, called "Employer of the Day." Each engineering program has its own application requirements. Transfer students must meet UGA admissions requirements plus the requirements for the College of Engineering's "High Demand Majors" (all of the engineering majors are considered "high demand"). Applicants are ranked each semester, and the cut-off differs according to the number of applicants and their qualifications each admissions season. Until a student's coursework is completed, they are considered an "intended" engineering major. REP Program admissions requirements are available at enr.uga.edu.

Question: The required personal statement of purpose portion the application packet has a later deadline than the general transfer application (see enr.uga.edu/academics/admissions-process). **Answer:** Yes. In addition, Personal Statements may be completed at any REP institution's test site (and not just at the UGA Testing Center).

Georgia Tech (presentation file attached)

Dr. Larry Jacobs presented an overview of Georgia Tech's engineering programs. He announced that Dr. Steven McLaughlin is the new Dean of the College of Engineering at GT. The REP Program was first conceived as GTREP – a way for students across Georgia to prepare to transfer to an engineering program at Georgia Tech. GTREP and its successor, RETP, were articulation agreements that guaranteed students who met the requirements a spot in one of GT's engineering programs. Georgia Tech is no longer able to comply with articulation agreements, and with five institutions in Georgia now offering full engineering programs, GT prefers the new REP framework. The REP Program is an opportunity for students who didn't receive optimal preparation for rigorous engineering programs at the high school level to succeed at any of the five engineering institutions in the state.

Dr. Jacobs reported that 20% of GT students don't start there as incoming freshmen. As transfer applicants, choice of major really matters because competition is extremely fierce for popular majors such as mechanical engineering and computer science. Niche engineering programs, such as nuclear and radiation engineering, tend to have lower enrollment and less competition. Dr. Jacobs recommends that students applying to transfer should look at the student snapshots on the GT website. He stressed that because GT needs to control enrollment across majors and progress students through to graduation in a timely manner, once enrolled, engineering students are not allowed to change their major. However, students may choose a minor (computer science is popular).

Georgia Tech takes a holistic view of its applicants – e.g., did they take the hardest courses available to them, did they serve in the military, how involved were they in their community? GT wants students who are entrepreneurial, and they have programs to promote innovation and invention. GT also has a program to promote women in engineering, which has resulted in 40% of the 2017 freshman class being female.

The advantages of REP Program versus regular transfer follow.

- Cohorts of students are powerful because they tend to work together
- GT knows what each institution's evaluations/grades indicate because of the long-established relationships
- REP students are better prepared to succeed in engineering programs
- This is the format with which GT wants to interface with USG

Question: REP Coordinators can't see the admissions form that the applicants see. **Answer:** Dr. Jacobs will address this issue.

Dr. Davoud thanked the REP Program representatives from the engineering schools, noting that this was a great forum, and he was pleased with the range of experience with the REP Program represented today. The engineering schools truly value what the sending institutions do, because you are the foundation for engineering across the state of Georgia.

It is important for the REP Coordinators to realize that all of our students want to go to a top university, but you need to work with your students to be realistic and practical. All of the programs are accredited or will be; and together, the engineering institutions have significant capacity to provide an excellent education and career preparation for Georgia's students. It is important that we also reach Georgia's students who might be looking outside of Georgia for their engineering education – keeping them in Georgia is good for the state's economic development, and allows the USG to spread its resources throughout the state. Further, each engineering institution has its own strengths.

Each engineering institution is encouraged to hold an information session for the Coordinators and students to visit and learn more about the school. Please contact any of the engineering schools if you

have any questions. We will distribute a survey to the Coordinators to gauge the effectiveness of this meeting and determine how to improve communications in future.

Question & Answer Session

Question: Because students can no longer be designated “Pre-engineering” due to financial aid regulations, how do the sending institutions tag REP Program students? **Answer:** Each institution should work with their Registrar to identify students in the program.

Question: The USG site abbreviated the REP Program as “RTP.” What is the correct name for the Program? **Answer:** “Regents’ Engineering Pathway (REP) Program.” “Regents” is possessive, “Pathway” is singular, and we don’t know why USG uses RTP instead of REP.

Question: How do we guide students to the right major for their interests? **Answer:** Dr. Jacobs recommended the Sloan Foundation website (sloan.org). GS has an FYE course for engineering & computing to inform students about the different disciplines, and includes career information in each program’s recruiting brochure. Dr. Pidaparti and Dr. Ball recommended the ASEE website (asee.org).

Question: How does GT credit undergraduate research for freshmen and sophomores? **Answer:** Dr. Jacobs responded that the GT admissions office works with the College to gauge students’ qualifications. He also recommends that students get involved in student organizations, and noted that GT as a whole is emphasizing its students’ mental health given the recent tragedy. Dr. Davoud noted that research engages students in your curriculum and most likely helps their GPA, so he encourages you to help get your students involved in research. Dr. Pidaparti added that applicants should include research experience in their Personal Statement of Purpose, noting that research reflects the student’s passion for the discipline. There is also space for activities and publications in the general transfer application.

Question: Do you expect GT’s required GPA to increase? **Answer:** Yes, based on current applications.

Question: We discourage students from taking online courses – do you? **Answer:** KSU does not. Georgia Tech does – they have online courses and degrees and are moving in that direction, but they want to do it the GT way, and don’t accept other institutions’ online courses.

Question: With four relatively new engineering institutions, there is no input from the sending school’s Coordinator as to when their students apply to transfer. This decreases the quality of the sending program because the coordinator can’t track or work with the student. Dr. Cameron Coates suggests therefore that the REP Program require students to apply for transfer through the sending school’s REP Coordinator. **Answer:** KSU and GS are not Research 1 institutions and are required to accept any and all students who meet the transfer application requirements. **Follow-up question:** Sending institutions want a list of their students who apply and a list of students who are admitted. **Answer:** The engineering deans will look into this and address the issue.

Question: What is required for international students for the REP Program? Are they treated any differently? **Answer:** Not for KSU or GS. UGA and Georgia Tech are sensitive to being state institutions and give some preference to in-state students.

Question: We don’t see a clear pathway for transfer credits to the four newer engineering institutions – can we come up with course equivalencies? **Answer:** We will work with you and update the course equivalencies for transfer as needed.